



United States  
Environmental Protection  
Agency

# Cleanup Schedule Announced for Contaminated River and Creek

**Kerr-McGee Kress Creek/West Branch DuPage River Site**

**Kerr-McGee Sewage Treatment Plant Site**

DuPage County, Illinois

August 2005

## Information session

Representatives from EPA, local communities, Kerr-McGee and other organizations will make themselves available to the public to discuss the cleanup project at an informal meeting **Wednesday, Aug. 10, 4 – 8 p.m., West Chicago City Hall, 475 Main St.** This is not a formal public meeting, rather you are free to stop by at any time during the session to talk with these representatives.

This particular meeting will focus on the cleanup of Reach 1 from a storm sewer outlet on Kress Creek to May Street. Detailed cleanup design information on this section will be available to the public by the time of the information session.

## Documents available

Official site-related documents are available for public viewing at these libraries:

### **West Chicago Public Library**

118 W. Washington St.

### **Warrenville Public Library**

28W751 Stafford Place

**On the Internet:** [epa.gov/region5/sites/kerrmcgee/index.htm](http://epa.gov/region5/sites/kerrmcgee/index.htm)

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Kerr-McGee Chemical Corp. working under the oversight of U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has released a proposed cleanup schedule for radioactive contamination in and around portions of Kress Creek and the West Branch of the DuPage River in DuPage County, Ill. Kerr-McGee has divided the cleanup into sections called “reaches” and will work on the project in phases over the next four years moving from upstream to downstream. Cleanup of the first section, called Reach 5A, began earlier this summer and will be completed this month. Reach 5A runs along the West Branch DuPage River from the West Chicago Sewage Treatment Plant to Gary’s Mill Road (*see map insert*). After Reach 5A is completed, cleanup work on the next section, called Reach 1, will immediately begin and last into November, according to the planned schedule. Reach 1 goes along Kress Creek from a storm sewer discharge pipe to May Street. The proposed schedule calls for all sections to be cleaned up by late 2009. The entire cleanup schedule and a map are laid out in detail on the middle pages of this fact sheet. The EPA-approved cleanup plan calls for contaminated riverbank soil and river mud (sediment) to be dug up from each section and disposed of in an approved facility away from the site.

## Site history

The EPA Superfund sites in the West Chicago area were contaminated by radioactive thorium waste material. The waste was generated by a processing facility (now closed and owned by the Kerr-McGee Chemical Corp.) that operated in West Chicago between 1932 and 1973. The Kerr-McGee facility itself is not part of the Kress Creek site and is being cleaned up under the supervision of the Illinois Emergency Management Agency, Division of Nuclear Safety.

Sand-like waste known as mill tailings was available as free fill material from the 1930s through the 1950s and was used throughout the West Chicago area for landscaping projects and filling in low ground around the West Chicago sewage treatment plant. It was later determined that the radioactive material was potentially hazardous. Waste from the Kerr-McGee facility also entered Kress Creek through a storm sewer, contaminating the creek and the West Branch DuPage River. The thorium was also deposited onto floodplains during high water periods and eroded from the sewage treatment plant grounds. The source of the pollution has been controlled so no more thorium is entering the creek.

Radioactivity surveys performed in the West Chicago area by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission resulted in EPA placing the sewage treatment plant and Kress Creek sites on the Agency’s National Priorities List of Superfund

sites in the early 1990s. EPA began studying the sites in 1993. Later by legal agreement Kerr-McGee took over the investigation and did some cleanup work on residential properties located along Kress Creek and on portions of the sewage treatment plant property. This latest schedule of cleanup projects will tackle contamination in the river and creek and along their banks.

## Cleanup details

EPA selected the final cleanup plan for the Kress Creek/West Branch DuPage River site in a document called a record of decision signed this March. The site consists of about a mile and a half of Kress Creek and about five miles of the West Branch DuPage River south of where the creek joins the river.

The cleanup involves isolating the contaminated areas and “dewatering” them by pumping out the water to allow dry excavation. As the cleanup progresses downstream, entire sections of the creek or river will be blocked off, and the water will be pumped around those sections using a bypass system. After the radioactive soil and mud have been removed, Kerr-McGee will restore and replant the areas affected by the cleanup.

EPA selected the final cleanup plan for the two different portions of the sewage treatment plant site in a record of decision signed in September 2004. The section of the site containing the sewage treatment plant is called the upland portion and polluted soil was removed from there in 2003 and 2004. The DuPage River portion of the sewage treatment site runs from the riverbank next to the facility for a little more than a mile to where Kress Creek joins the river. Similar to the Kress Creek site, this cleanup involves isolating the contaminated areas and pumping out the water to allow dry excavation. In some stretches, small areas of contamination will be isolated and removed without having to block off an entire section of river.

This March, Kerr-McGee signed two separate legal agreements, one with the federal government and the state of Illinois, and one with the local communities. Under the agreements, Kerr-McGee will design and carry out the cleanup work in the creek and river under the oversight of EPA and the local communities. In addition to removing the targeted areas of contamination, Kerr-McGee will restore the ground affected by the cleanup. The cleanup design plan for each segment of the creek and river will contain a detailed restoration plan that you can read in the official site documents (*see box front page*).

## Cleanup progress

Reaches 1 through 5B (*refer to map*) must be completed before any of the reaches downstream of the creek/river confluence can be cleaned up. The proposed cleanup schedule anticipates that the reaches will be cleaned up in the following order: 5A first, followed by Reaches 1, 2, 3, 4, 5B, 5C, 5D, 5E, 6, 7 and 8.

The announced timetable will be adjusted as necessary throughout the project. For example, if the work in Reach 1 can be completed ahead of schedule, then the next segment, Reach 2, would start earlier than anticipated. Similarly, a delay in the work within a particular segment would delay the start date for the following reach. The final cleanup design for each section will be available for review at the document libraries (*see box front page*) as they are finished. Each design plan will contain an updated schedule for all remaining reaches so the public can follow the project as it progresses.

In November 2004, Kerr-McGee started some cleanup work on portions of Reach 5A and removed 562 cubic yards of contaminated soil from along the eastern edge of the sewage treatment plant property. EPA approved the cleanup design for all the remaining areas of Reach 5A earlier this year, and Kerr-McGee resumed cleanup work there in late June. The Reach 5A work is expected to be completed this month.

The next area to be cleaned up will be Reach 1. As of this update, EPA, the local communities and other parties are reviewing Kerr-McGee’s revised design for Reach 1. EPA anticipates that the design will be approved in time for the cleanup work to begin there this month and last about 14 weeks. After Reach 1, cleanup of Reach 2 will begin and so on through the numbered sections.

Kerr-McGee will contact each affected property owner during the design process for that particular reach and explain the cleanup work and discuss how their property will be restored following the cleanup. Each property owner will have input into how their property will be restored.

## Information Session

### Reach 1 Cleanup

Wednesday, Aug. 10

4 - 8 p.m.

West Chicago City Hall

475 Main St.

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## Contact EPA

EPA staffers are available to answer questions:

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weekdays 9 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Office address:

EPA Region 5

77 W. Jackson Blvd.

Chicago, IL 60604

## Mailing list additions

If you or someone you know would like to be added to the mailing list for the Kerr-McGee Kress Creek/West Branch DuPage River or Sewage Treatment Plant sites, fill out this form and mail it to the address below:

U.S. EPA Region 5

Office of Public Affairs (P-19J)

77 W. Jackson Blvd.

Chicago, IL 60604

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

\*Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_

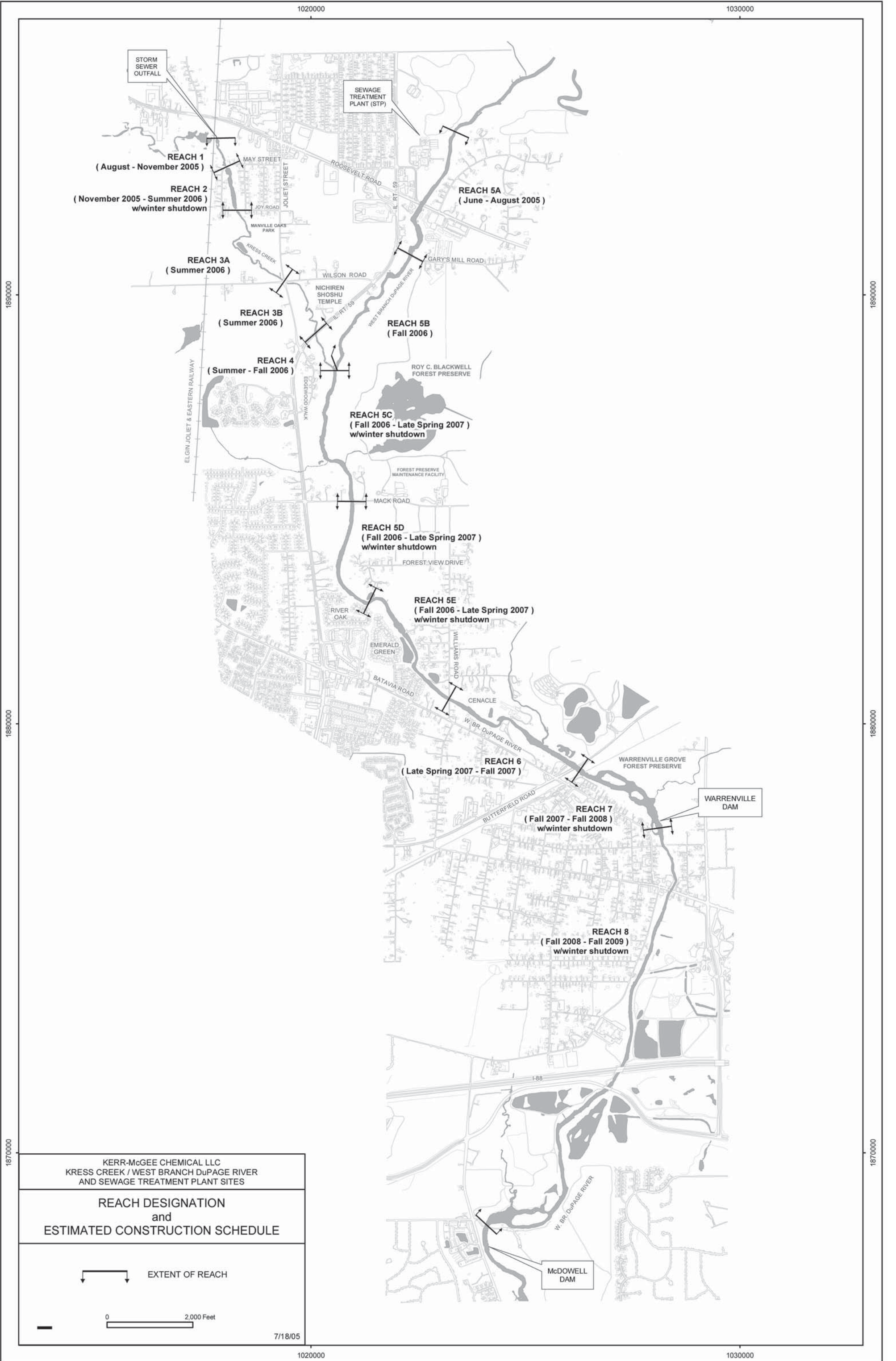
\*Phone (Daytime) \_\_\_\_\_ \*(Evening) \_\_\_\_\_

\*E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

Items marked with (\*) are optional.

*Once you are on the mailing list, you will automatically receive information from EPA regarding the Kerr-McGee Kress Creek/West Branch DuPage River or Sewage Treatment Plant site.*







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**KERR-McGEE KRESS CREEK/WEST BRANCH DuPAGE RIVER SITE  
KERR-McGEE SEWAGE TREATMENT PLANT SITE  
Cleanup Schedule Announced for Contaminated River and Creek**

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